

**National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)  
FY07 Annual Freedom of Information Act Report**

**I. Basic Information**

- A. Name, title, address, and telephone number of person(s) to be contacted with questions about the report.

*Stephen L. McConnell, Principal Agency FOIA Officer  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)  
300 E Street, SW, Code: NB000  
Washington, DC 20546-0001  
Telephone: 202.358.0068*

- B. Electronic address for report on the World Wide Web.

[www.hq.nasa.gov/office/pao/FOIA](http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/pao/FOIA)

- C. How to obtain a copy of the report in paper form.

*National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Attention: Freedom of Information Act Office  
300 E Street, SW, Code: NB000  
Washington, DC 20546*

**II. How to Make a FOIA Request**

- A. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all individual agency components and offices that receive FOIA requests.

NASA Headquarters Attn: FOIA Office, Code P Washington, DC 20546	Office of the Inspector General Attn: FOIA Office, Code W Washington, DC 20546	Ames Research Center Attn: FOIA Office, Code 19-40 Moffett Field, CA 94035
Dryden Flight Research Center Attn: FOIA Office, PO Box 273 Edwards, CA 93523	Glenn Research Center Attn: FOIA Office, Code 0610 21000 Brookpark Road Cleveland, OH 44135	Goddard Space Flight Center Attn: FOIA Office, Code 213.1 Greenbelt, MD 20771
Johnson Space Center Attn: FOIA Office, Code AP2 Houston, TX 77058	Kennedy Space Center Attn: FOIA Office, Code XA-A1 Kennedy Space Center, FL 32899	Langley Research Center Attn: FOIA Office, Code 154 Hampton, VA 23681
Marshall Space Flight Center Attn: FOIA Office, Code CS20 Marshall Space Flight Ctr, AL 35812	Stennis Space Center Attn: FOIA Office, Code CA100 Stennis Space Center, MS 39529	NASA Shared Service Center Attn: FOIA Office Box 5100, Standby Road Stennis Space Center, MS 39529

B. Brief description of the agency's response-time ranges (in working days):

These time ranges denote the median dates from the 13 decentralized FOIA Requester Service Centers, which maintain and track their individual response times.

Expedited: 29-94 days                      Simple: 5-42 days                      Complex: 12-184 days

C. Brief description of why some requests are not granted:

Most of the denials part based on exempted material requested. Others were based on no information was found responsive to the request, while others withdrew their request after finding the information electronically. Some of the requests were not agency records and we either forwarded the request to the responsive agency or referred the requester to the responsive agency.

**III. Definitions of Terms and Acronyms Used in the Report**

A. Agency-specific acronyms or other terms.

NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
HQ	NASA Headquarters
ARC	Ames Research Center
DFRC	Dryden Flight Research Center
GSPC	Goddard Space Flight Center
JSC	Johnson Space Flight Center
KSC	Kennedy Space Flight Center
LaRC	Langley Research Center
GRC	Glen Research Center
MSFC	Marshall Space Flight Center
NSSC	NASA Shared Service Center
SSC	Stennis Space Center
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
E-FOIA	Electronic Freedom of Information Act

B. Basic terms, expressed in common terminology.

FOIA/PA request – Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act request. A FOIA request is generally a request for access to records concerning a third party, an organization, or a particular topic of interest. A Privacy Act request is a request for records concerning one self; such requests are also treated as FOIA requests. (All requests for access to records, regardless of which law is cited by the requester, are included in this report.)

Initial Request – a request to a federal agency for access to records under the Freedom of Information Act.

Appeal – a request to a federal agency asking that it review at a higher administrative level a full denial or partial denial of access to records under the Freedom of Information Act, or any other FOIA determination such as a matter pertaining to fees.

Processed Request or Appeal – a request or appeal for which an agency has taken a final action on the request or the appeal in all respects.

Multi-track processing – a system in which simple requests requiring relatively minimal review are placed in one processing track and more voluminous and complex requests are placed in one or more other tracks. Requests in each track are processed on a first-in/first out basis. A requester who has an urgent need for records may request expedited processing (see below).

Expedited processing – an agency will process a FOIA request on an expedited basis when a requester has shown an exceptional need or urgency for the records which warrants prioritization of his or her request over other requests that were made earlier.

Simple request – a FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in its fastest (non-expedited) track based on the volume and/or simplicity of records requested.

Complex request – a FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in a slower track based on the volume and/or complexity of records requested.

Grant – an agency decision to disclose all records in full in response to a FOIA request.

Partial grant – an agency decision to disclose a record in part in response to a FOIA request, deleting information determined to be exempt under one or more of the FOIA's exemptions; or a decision to disclose some records in their entirety, but to withhold others in whole or in part.

Denial – an agency decision not to release any part of a record or records in response to a FOIA request because all the information in the requested records is determined by the agency to be exempt under one or more of the FOIA's exemptions, or for some procedural reason (such as because no record is located in response to a FOIA request).

Time limits – the time period in the Freedom of Information Act for an agency to respond to a FOIA request (ordinarily 20 working days from proper receipt of a "perfected" FOIA request).

"Perfected" request – a FOIA request for records that adequately describes the records sought, which has been received by the FOIA office of the agency or agency component in possession of the records, and for which there is no remaining question about the payment of applicable fees.

Exemption 3 statute – a separate federal statute prohibiting the disclosure of a certain type of information and authorizing its withholding under FOIA subsection (b)(3).

Median number – the middle, not average, number. For example, of 3, 7, and 14, the median number is 7.

Average number – the number obtained by dividing the sum of a group of numbers by the quantity of numbers in the group. For example, of 3, 7, and 14, the average number is 8.

#### **IV. Exemption 3 Statutes**

List of Exemption 3 statutes relied on by agency during current fiscal year:

- 5 USC 638(j)(2) – Contracts withheld data generated by contractors who elected to retain their rights in accordance with the retention period to under the contract.
- 10 USC 2305(g) – Procurement, unsuccessful proposals for competitive procurements and those portions of successful proposals that were not incorporated into the contracts.
- 22 USC 2751 – Technical data withheld according to regulations establishing lists or categories of technical data that may not be exported, under the Arms Export Control Act.
- 35 USC 205 – Authorize federal agencies to withhold from disclose to the public information disclosing any invention in which the federal government owns or may own a right, title or interest for reasonable time in order for a patent application to be filed.
- 41 USC 423 – Performance evaluations compiled by the procurement office are used in source selection activities covered by the Procurement Integrity Act and are considered sensitive.

**V. Initial FOIA/PA Access Requests**

**A. Numbers of initial requests:**

**1. Number of requests pending as of end of preceding fiscal year:**

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
7	0	3	13	134	10	0	11	56	0	0	2	5	241

**2. Number of requests received during current fiscal year:**

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
108	19	50	180	317	62	244	154	50	172	7	17	36	1416

**3. Number of requests processed during current fiscal year:**

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
57	17	52	152	313	61	233	161	47	172	6	19	36	1326

**4. Number of requests pending as of end of current fiscal year:**

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
58	2	1	41	138	11	11	4	59	0	1	0	5	331

**B. Disposition of initial requests:**

**1. Number of total grants:**

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
14	8	22	41	88	15	80	41	17	66	5	5	6	408

**2. Number of partial grants:**

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
11	7	16	69	32	12	62	50	18	80	0	10	13	380

**3. Number of denials:**

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
3	0	1	0	6	4	9	4	0	4	1	0	2	34

**a. Number of times each FOIA exemption used:**

**Exemption 1:**

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Exemption 2:**

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
4	0	1	0	2	6	5	4	2	2	0	0	10	36

**Exemption 3:**

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
1	0	2	10	0	6	7	0	3	6	1	0	0	36

**Exemption 4:**

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
9	6	14	62	18	11	49	28	8	74	0	5	0	284

**Exemption 5:**

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
5	1	1	3	7	0	12	5	3	8	0	7	7	59

**Exemption 6:**

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
6	0	2	3	22	6	16	20	8	2	0	0	8	93

Exemption 7:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27	31

Exemption 8:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Exemption 9:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

4. Other reasons for nondisclosure:

a. No records:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
5	1	5	15	29	14	38	14	2	8	0	1	11	143

b. Referrals:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
6	0	3	9	88	3	12	17	2	3	0	1	0	144

c. Request withdrawn:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
5	1	4	10	7	2	10	11	2	4	0	0	0	56

d. Fee-related reason:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
0	0	0	3	0	0	5	1	0	5	0	1	0	15

e. Records not reasonably described:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
0	0	0	3	10	0	9	1	1	0	0	0	3	27

f. Not a proper FOIA request for some other reason:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
0	0	0	1	7	1	3	11	0	0	0	0	0	23

g. Not an agency record:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
0	0	0	0	9	7	2	1	3	0	0	1	0	23

h. Duplicate request:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
4	0	1	1	4	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	1	16

i. Other (Mail Rec'd via FOIA and handled outside the Act):

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
9	0	0	0	33	3	3	9	0	0	0	0	0	57

**VI. Appeals of Initial Denials of FOIA/PA Requests**

A. Numbers of appeals.

1. Number of appeals received during fiscal year: 29
2. Number of appeals processed during fiscal year: 29

B. Disposition of appeals.

- 1. Number completely upheld: 5
- 2. Number partially reversed: 7
- 3. Number completely reversed: 7

a. Number of times each FOIA exemption used:

Exemption 1: 2      Exemption 2: 2      Exemption 3: 2      Exemption 4: 7  
 Exemption 5: 5      Exemption 6: 1      Exemption 7: 2      Exemption 8: 0  
 Exemption 9: 0

4. Other reasons for nondisclosure:

- a. No records: 3
- b. Referrals: 0
- c. Request withdrawn: 7
- d. Fee-related reason: 0
- e. Records not reasonably described: 0
- f. Not a proper FOIA request for some other reason: 0
- g. Not an agency record: 0
- h. Duplicate request: 0
- i. Other (specify): 0

**VII. Compliance with Time Limits/Status of Pending Requests**

A. Median processing time for requests processed during the year.

1. Simple requests:

a. Number of requests processed:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
45	16	16	17	121	61	57	88	9	141	5	19	36	631

b. Median number of days to process:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
36	19	6.5	28	21	7	5	7	42	11	16	21	39	21

2. Complex requests:

a. Number of requests processed:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
12	0	36	131	192	0	171	73	36	31	1	0	0	683

b. Median number of days to process:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
58	0	16.5	24	34.5	0	12	33	184	38	180	0	0	38

3. Expedited requests:

a. Number of requests processed:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
0	1	0	4	0	0	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	12

b. Median number of days to process:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
0	29	0	36.5	0	0	90	0	94	0	0	0	0	36.5

B. Status of pending requests.

1. Number of requests pending as of end of current fiscal year:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
58	2	1	41	138	11	11	4	59	0	1	0	5	331

2. Median number of days that such requests were pending as of that date:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
101	77.5	3	87	127	46.5	120	78	270	0	32	0	7	87

**VIII. Comparisons with Previous Year: (optional)**

A. Comparison of numbers of requests received:                      FY06: 1238                      FY07: 1416

B. Comparison of numbers of requests processed:                      FY06: 1132                      FY07: 1326

C. Comparison of requests were pending as of end of FY:                      FY06: 241                      FY07: 331

D. Other statistics significant to agency:

E. Other narrative statements describing agency efforts to improve timeliness of FOIA performance and to make records available to the public (e.g., backlog-reduction efforts; specification of average number of hours per processed request; training activities; public availability of new categories of records):

In an effort to decrease the number of requests, processing time, and costs associated with processing requests, NASA FOIA offices are referring requesters to information which is available electronically from our agency's web site or web sites of other agencies which may have responsive documents provided for the public in this similar manner.

**IX. Costs/FOIA Staffing**

A. Staffing levels.

1. Number of full-time FOIA personnel:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
1	1	1	1	4	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	16

2. Number of personnel with part-time or occasional FOIA duties (in work-years):

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
1.4	.1	.15	1.2	.4	.15	.25	.13	2.35	.02	.1	.15	.25	7.45

3. Total number of personnel (in work-years):

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
2.4	1.1	1.15	2.2	4.4	1.15	1.25	2.13	3.35	1.02	1.1	1.15	.25	23.45

B. Total costs (including staff and all resources).

1. FOIA processing (including appeals):

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG
\$115,640	\$52,464	\$84,091	\$240,244	\$425,417	\$95,707	\$100,650	\$157,649	\$361,597	\$117,115	\$72,562	\$81,041	\$26,479

2. Litigation-related activities: \$108,312
3. Total costs: \$2,038,968
4. Comparison with previous year: \$1,473,386 (+ 38%)
5. Statement of additional resources needed for FOIA compliance: (optional)

**X. Fees**

A. Total amount of fees collected by agency for processing requests:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
\$1,394	\$45	\$1,341	\$2,996	\$0	\$14,880	\$2,013	\$5,403	\$276	\$1,154	\$0	\$42	\$0	\$29,544

B. Percentage of total costs:

ARC	DFRC	GRC	GSFC	HQ	JPL	JSC	KSC	LaRC	MSFC	NSSC	SSC	OIG	NASA
1%	1%	2%	1%	0%	16%	2%	3%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%

**XI. FOIA Regulations (Including Fee Schedule)**

This report is available on our NASA FOIA web site at: [www.hq.nasa.gov/pao/FOIA](http://www.hq.nasa.gov/pao/FOIA)

**XII. Guidance/Template**

A. Description of supplemental/modification of agency improvement plan:

**Modification 2** (Dated: August 21, 2007)

In accordance with Executive Order 13392, "Improving Agency Disclosure of Information," the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) have updated its original FOIA Improvement Plan, dated June 13, 2006.

Change to read –

- 1) Name: **FOIA Database**
- 2) Brief statement of goal sought: Replace current FileMaker Pro database with an established commercial-based system which will allow the public to access and track the current status of its FOIA request.
- 3) List of all distinct steps planned to be taken: Interview vendors and evaluate their FOIA database systems for procurement.
- 4) Time milestones: Initial milestone - No later than December 31, 2007, for the review and decision of which commercial package to procure; have the new system up and operational no later than September 30, 2008, for implementation for FY09.
- 5) Means of measurement of success: Procuring the commercial program and having it available for testing and use during FY08.

Justification –

This agency's FOIA office established an adhoc group to evaluate commercial FOIA database products. During the past fiscal year this group completed this review process, and recommended to continue with the procurement process. This recommendation would replace our agency current FOIA database with one that would allow web access to the public. However, during the evaluation process it was noted the need to conduct a testing phase of this commercial purchased software to ensure operability within our 13 decentralizes FOIA Requester Service Centers and our supporting Information Technology office. Also our goal date of September 30, 2007 was found to be unrealistic under our current budgetary restrains and has been pushed to be funded during our FY08 budget cycle.

- B. Report on agency implementation of its plan, including its performance in meeting milestones, with respect to each improvement area:

**Customer Service:**

This agency has made tremendous strides in the areas that were seen as potential problems in our FOIA processing and customer service. This included conducting Customer Service Awareness during our annual agency FOIA conference. We have focused on ensuring our decentralized process and improving our customer relations at each center location.

**FOIA Database:**

Our agency completed its review of the 'commercial off the shelf' (COTS) FOIA database products. This included meeting with representative of those various companies and viewing their product demonstrations. It continued with site visits to those organizations which currently have procured these various products to ascertain their evaluation of these COTS currently in the field. After conducting this evaluation phase, discussions between the Principal Agency FOIA Officer, Chief FOIA Officer and the Office of the Chief Information Officer to obtain funding and procure a COTS solution for replacing our current FOIA database, with a web based version.

**Backlog Reduction:**

Headquarters FOIA Requester Service Center has been able to add a permanent hire in its office and the Langley Research Center has temporarily taken some additional duties from its FOIA Public Liaison Officer to focus more on its center backlog issues.

During this rating period NASA agreed in a settlement litigation to review over 200 cubic feet of records currently stored at National Archive and Records Administration's Washington Federal Records Center; to prevent additional backlog issues we've set up a task force made up of three (3) center FOIA Public Liaison Officers with no backlog issues to conduct this review.

- C. Identification and discussion of any deficiency in meeting plan milestones: (if applicable)

Not Applicable

- D. Additional narrative statement regarding other executive order-related activities: (optional)

None.

- E. Concise descriptions of FOIA exemptions:

The exemptions authorize federal agencies to withhold information covering: (1) classified national defense and foreign relations information; (2) internal agency rules and practices; (3) information that is prohibited from disclosure by another federal law; (4) trade secrets and other confidential business information; (5) inter-agency or intra-agency communications that are protected by legal privileges; (6) information involving matters of personal privacy; (7) records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes, to the extent that the production of those records (A) could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings, (B) would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication, (C) could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, (D) could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of a confidential source, (E) would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or (F) could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual; (8) information relating to the

supervision of financial institutions; and (9) geological information on wells. The three exclusions, which are rarely used, pertain to especially sensitive law enforcement and national security matters.

F. Additional Statistics:

1. Ten Oldest Pending FOIA Requests:

Calendar Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Requests						Oct 22 Nov 2 Nov 5	Jan 31 Mar 1 Mar 15 Apr 4 Apr 11 May 27 Jun 21		

2. Consultations:

(\*) - Our current FOIA tracking system is not able to compute the number of consultations received, processed or pending; nor are we able to compute the ten oldest pending consultations received from other agencies. We are implementing plans to collect these statistics future annual reports.

A. Number of Consultations Received, Processed and Pending:

Consultations received from other agencies during FY07	Consultations received from other agencies that were processed by your agency during FY07 (including those received prior to FY07)	Consultations received from other agencies that were pending at your agency as of October 1, 2007 (including those received prior to FY07)
*	*	*

B. Ten Oldest Pending Consultations Received From Other Agencies:

Calendar Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Consults Recieved	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

G. Attachment: Agency Improvement Plan

**FOIA IMPROVEMENT PLAN –**

A. Characterize overall nature of agency’s FOIA operations:

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) maintains a decentralized FOIA process, in which we operate and staff 13 FOIA Requester Service Centers at each of our NASA Centers or components. This approach enables NASA to reduce our FOIA request processing time and provide a quicker response to the public requesters.

B. List all areas selected for review:

- (1) The initial FOIA request process was reviewed against our published regulations set forth at 14 CFR Part 1206.
- (2) The current backlog status at each of our decentralized FOIA offices.
- (3) The number of requests received during the past three years.
- (4) Our agency’s FOIA processes and practices used at each of our decentralized FOIA processing locations.

- (5) FOIA staffing at each location.
- (6) FOIA request volume by Center offices.
- (7) Our current public Web sites.

C. Include narrative statement summarizing results of review:

The results of our agency's FOIA review revealed that we have satisfied the requirements of Title 5 USC §552, but we have noted, that some of our Center FOIA Requester Service Centers maintain a small backlog of cases. Further, during FY03 – FY04, we actually improved on our median dates, even though the public FOIA requests increased significantly after the Columbia Space Shuttle tragedy and other NASA public events. NASA's response to FOIA requests after the Columbia accident was particularly noteworthy. Following the accident, we established an internal process to ensure responsive records were provided and technical and legal review were conducted; this, coupled with immediately providing these documents in our electronic reading room, allowed the media and public in days rather than months.

One of the lessons learned following for the Columbia accident provided NASA an opportunity to recognize that NASA needed to improve our FOIA process. As we endeavor to improve our disclosure of information to the public, we are developing this quick-response approach for our future FOIA processing. Also, our internal review showed the need to improve our computer hardware and software, such as:

- Procuring redaction software – to allow a quicker, more efficient means of redacting agency records.
- Individual desk scanners – to quicken the process to redact electronically and the ability to download document into our electronic reading room immediately upon completion of our initial release determination.

We also learned from our review that, out of our 13 FOIA Requester Service Centers, we had serious single-point failures at six locations. Not having an effective Center personnel back-up at those locations could create a serious backlog.

Finally, we discovered an important need to team build internally with our search teams within the program offices and our initial legal reviews by our legal offices. Their help and assistance are vital in reducing the backlog and response time to finalize the initial release determinations.

D. List all areas chosen as improvement areas for agency:

- FOIA Staffing
- Equipment / Logistics
- Web Site Improvements
- Agency Reference Handbook
- FOIA Database
- FOIA Training
- Communications
- Backlog Reduction

E. For each improvement area provide:

**FOIA Staffing**

- 1) Brief statement of goal sought: This improvement is based on several factors:
  - a) Eliminating single point failures at our NASA Centers.
  - b) Ensure that all FOIA positions are primary jobs.
  - c) Seek adequate administrative support for higher volume Center offices.
  - d) Standardize staff personnel practices concerning series and grades.

- 2) List of all distinct steps planned to be taken:
  - a) During the next several months, the agency's chief FOIA officer and chief FOIA public liaison officer will coordinate with the senior management at each NASA Center to ensure the identification of suitable employees that can be properly trained to serve as backups to our Centers' FOIA specialists.
  - b) During the above discussions at each Center, emphasis will be center around the importance of the assigned FOIA specialist's primary duties and functions. Any other duties must be secondary and must not hinder the FOIA process.
  - c) Seek an administrative support specialist to assist the Headquarters office in the daily processing of FOIA requests.
  - d) Discuss human resources at the agency level to standardized position description for agency FOIA personnel, including the development of a GS-7/9/11 information release specialist and a GS-12/13 senior information release specialist, in a standardized series.
- 3) Time milestones: These actions are expected to be completed in FY07. We will conduct an evaluation quarterly between now and FY08 on our improvement in this area.
- 4) Means of measurement of success: Overall success in this area will be based solely on the elimination of all single point failures at each of our 13 FOIA Requester Service Center locations and standardizing grades and series of our assigned FOIA staff, as stated above. We expect to achieve success once we have eliminated FOIA as a secondary function to other duties assigned.

#### **Equipment/Logistics**

- 1) Brief statement of goal sought: Redaction software should be procured for each Center FOIA Requester Service Center and dedicated scanning support/equipment should be acquired for each Center office.
- 2) List of all distinct steps planned to be taken: Each Center FOIA public liaison officer will budget for these items with either year-end funds (if available) or as part of the FY07 budget.
- 3) Time milestones: First milestone will be September 30, 2006, to ascertain which of our 13 FOIA Requester Service Centers have received both hardware and software. Second and Final Milestone will be first Quarter, FY07, in which all FOIA processing offices should have received both items.
- 4) Means of measurement of success: 100 percent of the FOIA Requester Service Centers have both desktop scanners and redaction software for implementation.

#### **Web Site Improvements**

- 1) Brief statement of goal sought: Redeveloping NASA's FOIA Web page to enhance the public's knowledge of our FOIA process. Redesign all subordinate FOIA web pages to incorporate the 'portal' design. Finally, consolidate the NASA Electronic Reading Room from 13 sites into one.
- 2) List of all distinct steps planned to be taken: Work with NASA Internet Services to development and design of the 'portal' look and feel among all subordinate FOIA sites.
- 3) Time milestones: Initial milestone is projected to be no later than 90 days from the end of FY06 to meet the expected completion date of September 30, 2006.
- 4) Means of measurement of success: 100 percent of the NASA Center Web pages updated with current information and having the 'portal' look and feel.

#### **Agency FOIA Reference Handbook**

- 1) Brief statement of goal sought: It has been over two years since the last update to our agency's FOIA Reference Handbook. The goal is to revise and update all agency information pertaining to its FOIA process including any changes or update directly related to Executive Order (EO) 13392. Download this handbook directly to our FOIA Web page.
- 2) List of all distinct steps planned to be taken: During the revision process, an ad hoc group of agency FOIA staff will conduct a page by page review, updating all changes since the last revision, deleting outdated information, and adding the newly adapted changes in accordance with EO 13392.
- 3) Time milestones: No later than September 30, 2006.

- 4) Means of measurement of success: Updated, printed, and posted onto our agency's FOIA Web page.

#### **FOIA Database**

- 1) Brief statement of goal sought: Replace current FileMaker Pro database with an established commercial-based system which will allow the public to access and track the current status of its FOIA request.
- 2) List of all distinct steps planned to be taken: Interview vendors and evaluate their FOIA database systems for procurement.
- 3) Time milestones: Initial milestone - No later than September 30, 2006, for the review and decision of which commercial package to procure; have the new system up and operational no later than September 30, 2007, for implementation for FY08.
- 4) Means of measurement of success: Procuring the commercial program and having it available for use by FY08.

#### **FOIA Training**

- 1) Brief statement of goal sought: Implement an annual mandatory FOIA training program to be held in conjunction with the annual NASA FOIA Conference for all assigned FOIA information release specialists and their designated backups.
- 2) List of all distinct steps planned to be taken: Budget travel and training dollars at each of our Centers dedicated for annual FOIA training at American Society of Access Professionals Annual Western Regional FOIA Training Conference and an annual agency FOIA Conference.
- 3) Time milestones: Annually during the budget process.
- 4) Means of measurement of success: 100 percent participation.

#### **Communications**

- 1) Brief statement of goal sought: Establish a toll free phone number for use by the public to contact the agency's FOIA Requester Service Center.
- 2) List of all distinct steps planned to be taken: Coordinate with the agency communications team to establish a toll free line and install in the agency's FOIA Requester Service Center. Post this information on NASA FOIA's Web page for public dissemination.
- 3) Time milestones: No later than June 14, 2006.
- 4) Means of measurement of success: 100 percent operational by the above date.

#### **Backlog Reduction**

- 1) Brief Statement of goal sought: To reduce the existing backlog of pending FOIA requests by a substantial number each year, by periodically and consistently focusing on the existing backlog. We will identify the agency five (5) oldest FOIA requests at the beginning of each FY quarter and close those by the end of that FY quarter.
- 2) List all distinct steps planned to be taken:
  - a) On a quarterly basis, during our scheduled FOIA video teleconference (Vits), each NASA FOIA Requester Service Center will report out on their oldest FOIA requests, which will vary based on the volume of the FOIA Requester Service Center.
  - b) A list of the agency's five (5) oldest FOIA requests will be created.
    1. This listing will provide the date of the request, date received, request's contact information, summary of the request, the current status, and any additional information concerning the process delay.
  - c) Develop an action plan for each individual FOIA request.
    1. The Chief FOIA Public Liaison Officer will personally review each identified FOIA request, and will;
      - a. Annotate specific instructions to complete any pending actions.
      - b. Elevate the focus to the agency and or center senior management concerning compliance with the FOIA to eliminate any bottlenecks in the processing flow.
      - c. Distribute cases amongst the lower volume processing FOIA Requester Service Centers to make initial release determinations.

- d. Require an immediate legal review of any initial determinations pending release.
  - 2. Based on these recommendations each identified NASA FOIA Requester Service Centers will be directed to:
    - a. Implement the actions directed by the Chief Public Liaison Officer.
    - b. If directed, electronically distribute requests for processing to its regional partners to conduct an initial determination of responsive agency records to pending FOIA requests to reduce its backlog.
  - d) Divide the 13 decentralized FOIA offices into three (3) regional areas which can provide additional assistance in processing FOIA requests.
    - 1. East Region – Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC), Glenn Research Center (GRC), Headquarters (HQ), Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and Langley Research Center (LaRC).
    - 2. South Region – Johnson Space Center (JSC), Kennedy Space Center (KSC), Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC), NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC), and Stennis Space Center (SSC).
    - 3. West Region – Ames Research Center (ARC), Dryden Space Flight Center (DFRC) and NASA Management Office-Jet Propulsion Laboratory (NMO-JPL).
  - 3) Time milestones: Identification of the five (5) oldest FOIA requests is to be conducted quarterly. Those identified will be evaluated and a timetable set for each individual FOIA request to be completed within FY Quarter. These actions are to be initiated First Quarter, FY07, and will continue quarterly till FY09.
- F. For the entire plan, group the improvement areas into the following time periods:
- 1) Areas anticipated to be completed by December 31, 2006:
    - Equipment/Logistics
    - Agency FOIA Handbook
    - FOIA Training
    - Communications
  - 2) Areas anticipated to be completed by December 31, 2007:
    - FOIA Staffing
  - 3) Areas anticipated to be completed after December 31, 2007:
    - FOIA Database
    - Backlog Reduction

**NASA FOIA Requester Service Center Addresses:**

NASA, FOIA Requester Service Center, Attention: Chief, FOIA Public Liaison Officer,  
Mail Stop 9P39, 300 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20546

NASA Ames Research Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Mail Stop 943-4, Moffett Field, CA 94035

NASA Dryden Flight Research Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Post Office Box 273, M/S 4839,  
Edwards, CA 93523

NASA Glenn Research Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, 21000 Brookpark Road, Cleveland, OH  
44135

NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Greenbelt, MD 20771

NASA Headquarters, FOIA Requester Service Center, Mail Stop 5-K39, 300 E Street, SW, Washington,  
DC 20546

NASA Office of the Inspector General, FOIA Requester Service Center, Mail Stop 8-V79, 300 E Street,  
SW, Washington, DC 20546

NASA Management Office – Jet Propulsion Laboratory, FOIA Requester Service Center, 4800 Oak Grove  
Drive, Pasadena, CA 91109

NASA Johnson Space Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Houston, TX 77058

NASA Kennedy Space Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Kennedy Space Center, FL 32899

NASA Langley Research Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Hampton, VA 23681

NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Huntsville, AL 35812

NASA Stennis Space Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Stennis Space Center, MS 39529

NASA Shared Services Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Bldg 5100, Stennis Space Center, MS  
39529

**NASA FOIA Public Liaison Officers and Service Center Contact Numbers:**

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**Langley Research Center**

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**Marshall Space Flight Center**

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**Stennis Space Center**

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**NASA Shared Services Center**

Koby South  
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